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Canadian Parks Service

4 MOUNTAIN PARKS

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Core Concept Stage
Four Mountain Parks
Planning Program

BANFF NATIONAL PARK

JASPER NATIONAL PARK

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK

YOHO NATIONAL PARK

Canada

89-04010/

Cette publication est aussi
disponible en français.

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4 MOUNTAIN PARKS

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INTRODUCTION

In early February 1986, the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Tom McMillan, presented to the public the document **"In Trust for Tomorrow: A Management Framework for Four Mountain Parks"**. This document provided the general focus for the management proposals presented in the Core Concept documents for Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho national parks. Each of the Core Concept documents was supplemented by a Background Report summarizing and updating relevant information.

Throughout the Four Mountain Parks Planning Program, Public Consultation was an important component. The Core Concepts distributed in January 1987, provided the public with the opportunity to comment on important park-specific proposals.

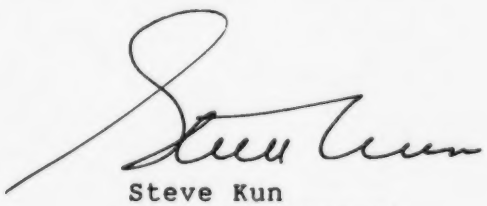
The public was invited to review the Concepts, send in their comments and/or attend meetings scheduled in Invermere, Field, Banff, Calgary, Edmonton, Jasper and Vancouver. Special meetings were arranged by interest groups in Ponoka, Edmonton, Calgary and Banff to discuss specific topics included in the Core Concepts. A major effort was made through newspaper advertisements and radio announcements to announce the program and its objectives.

In excess of 12,000 copies of information were distributed across Canada. A number of public and university libraries were provided with complete sets of information for their reference sections. In total, approximately 2056 individuals and groups responded with information or by attending meetings during this stage of the program.

The analysis of public comments has been completed. This document provides a summary of that analysis. The public comments, advice and recommendations provided by other government agencies and Parks' ongoing research are now being reviewed to revise the Core Concepts and develop park management plans for each of the four parks. These plans will be sent to the Minister for his consideration and approval.

Summaries of the approved management plans will be sent to those who have participated in the planning program. The complete park management plans and additional park plan summaries will be available upon request.

I would like to thank the thousands of individuals and groups who have made a very significant contribution to this program.



Steve Kun
Director General
Western Region

OVERVIEW

This document has been produced in three sections to highlight the three major sources of public input for the Core Concepts review stage of the Four Mountain Parks planning program.

section 1 is a park by park summary of public comments which were submitted on the response forms designed for each of the four mountain parks. Approximately 6,600 comments were recorded from the 596 response forms that were submitted by individuals and groups.

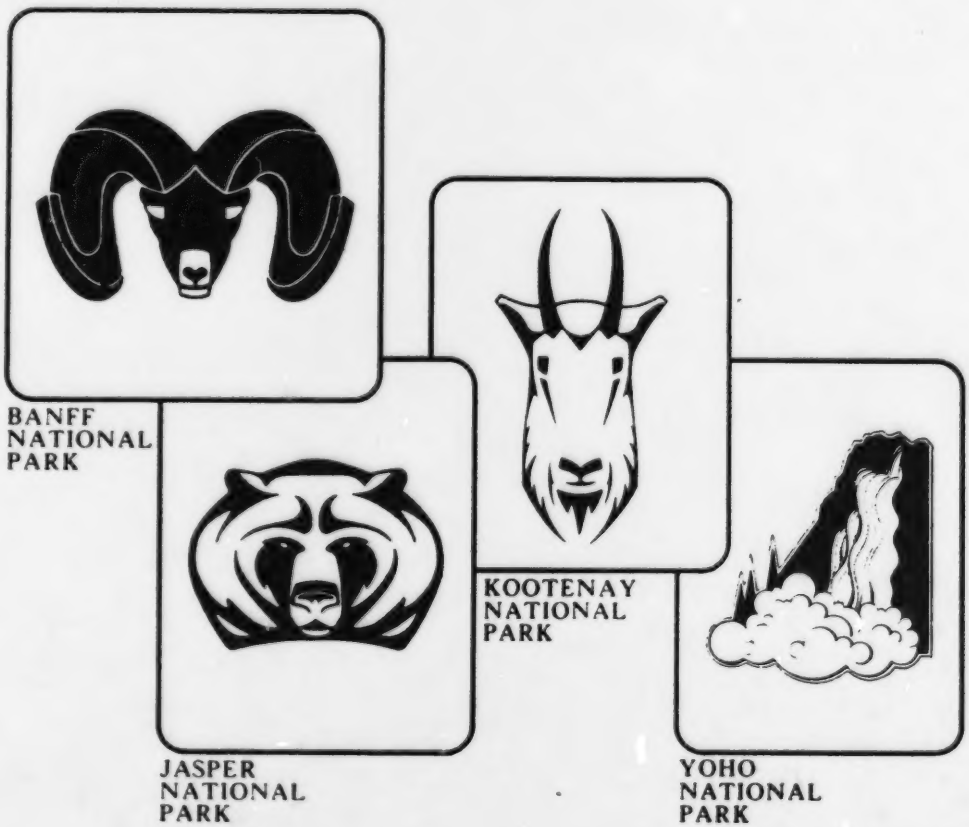
section 2 is a compilation of the public comments and recommendations made at the seven open house and public meeting sessions held in Alberta and British Columbia during this stage of the program. Approximately 250 comments were recorded from the 1361 participants attending the meetings.

section 3 is a summary of a number of comments and recommendations that were made in approximately 100 letters and briefs submitted by respondents. The majority of the comments made in these letters and briefs were transferred onto response forms and included in the analysis in Section One. Section Three highlights some additional comments that were not directly related to the planning core concepts or are notable because of the emphasis given in responding to the topic.

4 MOUNTAIN PARKS

section 1

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY



RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

Banff National Park
Core Concept

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Parks received 146 response forms on the Core Concepts prepared for Banff National Park. In addition to the response forms, there were numerous briefs and letters submitted. Additional comments from this input have been summarized separately at the end of this document.

All the topic categories in the response form received comment. The proposals for the day-use areas at the Upper Hot Springs, Johnson Lake and Lake Minnewanka received some additional attention from those responding, as did the Lake Louise Community Concept and the proposal for closure of the Spray River Hostel.

The Core Concepts and Parks' mandate for preservation and conservation were generally well supported. Respondents stressed that Banff's "National Park" character must be maintained.

The following narratives highlight the majority of comments and recommendations made under the various categories.

PARK CONCEPT

The comments received on this topic were strongly in support of the general park concept. Heritage resource protection, and the need for an improved communication and information program were often cited as highly important. Closer co-operation and co-ordination of activities with surrounding land management agencies in the region was encouraged.

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Parks' system of land use zoning was generally supported. The amount of Park land that received Zone I and Zone II designation however, was felt by some to be too limited. These respondents felt that additional areas, such as the Vermilion Lakes and the Middle Springs needed Zone I protection. Although more land designated as Zone II was recommended, specific areas were not identified.

It was suggested by respondents that gravel extraction from borrow pits within Banff National Park should be halted. If gravel was needed, they felt that it should be extracted from pits outside the park boundaries.

The treatment and handling of sewage, particularly in Banff Townsite was seen as inadequate and in need of special attention. The possible expansion of Outlying Commercial Accommodation facilities (OCAs), ski facilities and hotels, it was felt, would necessitate a close monitoring of sewage disposal requirements.

The installation of fences along the Trans-Canada Highway was credited for having substantially reduced roadside wildlife kills. Recommendations were made to continue the fencing program, particularly at known animal crossing locations.

Although there was support for a "no fishing" policy in the parks, it was suggested that if fish stocking was allowed to continue, it should be limited to the stocking of species native to the area.

VISITOR UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT

Backcountry Opportunities & Facilities

Suggestions were put forward that random camping in the backcountry should be permitted for those who were competent in selecting and maintaining a camp-site location.

Some respondents disapproved of the proposals to allow more roofed accommodation in the backcountry. Those respondents who contended that the backcountry should have no roofed accommodation felt that the fullest appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of a backcountry experience was lost with the presence of man-made roofed structures.

Day-Use Facilities & Services

The planning proposals for the day-use areas at Johnson Lake and Lake Minnewanka received a substantial number of responses. Two options were presented for Johnson Lake. Comments received on the response forms marginally favoured option one. Under this option, the dam would not be rebuilt and the lake would be allowed to return to its natural wetland state. In contrast to the comments submitted on response forms, a 2,200 signature petition in support of restoring Johnson Lake had been received by Parks (see also meeting report on this topic - page 45.)

Public comments on the development proposals at Lake Minnewanka were fairly evenly divided. Some felt that the area should be further developed as a water based day-use recreation area. On the other hand, there was a roughly equal number of respondents who felt that such a development would encourage overuse which would eventually destroy the area.

It was recommended that Parks implement stringent controls when dealing with recreation development proposals put forward by the private sector. It was felt that urban forms of recreational opportunities (tennis courts, skating rinks, golf courses, etc.) must be avoided in a national park setting.

Recreational Activities

On the topic of "Driving for Pleasure", the comments and suggestions provided by the respondents indicated that this activity remains a popular recreational pursuit in the park. To make this activity more pleasurable, it was suggested that additional pull-offs should be created for rest stops and viewing areas along the major automobile routes. For safety reasons and to provide a more leisurely experience, it was recommended that traffic speed limits should be lowered.

A number of respondents commented on the growing popularity of cross-country skiing as a recreational activity in the national parks. It was suggested however, that the number of trails that are track-set should not be increased.

There was a group of respondents who felt they would understand, appreciate and enjoy Banff National Park more by using horses in the Park. Horse access into the backcountry was seen as one of the few ways senior citizens and disabled visitors have of gaining an enjoyable wilderness experience. Comments opposing horse use were expressed by hikers who had encountered horses along trails or had used trails over which horses had travelled. A common suggestion was that separate horse trails needed to be established and clearly marked. It was also felt that the maintenance of horse trails should be shared between Parks and the horse users.

It was recommended that facilities for bicycling should be provided, since bicycling has become a popular form of transportation in the national parks. Separate cycling paths or wider paved shoulders along the parkways were suggested. Some concern was expressed with regard to the sharing of trails with hikers and horse users. Among the suggested solutions were that some trails should be designated for bicycle use and that use restrictions in identified areas of the park should be imposed. There were also comments that bicycles should not be considered an appropriate park activity.

Some respondents suggested that more information should be made available about caving activities in the park. It was felt that as the sport of caving became more popular, this information would be essential for safety reasons and to allow participants to better understand and experience cave resources.

ACCOMMODATION (OCAs, Camping, Hostels)

It was recommended that Parks increase the amount of camping opportunity available in the park. In addition, it was felt that visitors should be informed that hotel accommodation in the park is limited and that camping is an alternative.

The proposal to remove the Spray River Hostel received the special attention of a number of respondents. Form letters and briefs were received recommending that the hostel should be allowed to stay in its present location. It was felt that its close proximity to Banff townsite provided visitors with a conveniently located rustic alternative to the more urban accommodation available in the townsite.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

There was some concern expressed about wildlife mortality caused by traffic along the major routes through Banff National Park. The fencing program from the east gate to Banff Townsite was strongly supported. It was recommended that fencing along major routes should be considered at all points where animal crossings are known to be frequent.

It was recommended that highway signage should be improved to provide better direction, control and visitor information.

The planning option to link Vermilion Lakes Drive to the Bow Valley Parkway was not supported by respondents. It was generally recommended that Parks should retain Vermilion Lakes Drive as a dead end, slow speed route. Other suggestions included totally banning motorized traffic on Vermilion Lakes Drive, developing the road as a bicycle linkage to the Bow Valley Parkway and in contrast to the above, developing the road as a high speed access route.

COMMUNITY CONCEPT

Expansion of the Banff Townsite boundary was not a preferred proposal. It was felt that the problem of sewage disposal needed to be corrected before any further development, including "in-filling", could be considered. It was further suggested that development controls must include height maximum's for buildings and structural motifs designed to minimize the visual impact of structures in a national park setting.

The community concepts for the Lake Louise visitor centre received numerous comments. Most of the individuals and groups responding to this topic, supported the community concepts for Lake Louise and emphasized the need to limit growth. (see also the "Letters and Briefs section Page 71).

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

The proposals addressing Communication Services were generally supported by those responding. It was recommended however, that staff training should be upgraded in order to provide more and better information. In addition, an east gate information centre was strongly advocated. Some respondents suggested that the information provided at this facility should be co-ordinated with information provided by commercial outlets at Lake Louise.

AIR STRIP REMOVAL - UPDATE

The document "In Trust For Tomorrow" includes the statement that -

> The Banff and Jasper airfields are anomalous facilities, and it is not appropriate to retain them. They will be removed or, if there is a demonstrated need for emergency use, retained for that purpose only (Page 64).

Support for retaining the present airfield has come from chambers of commerce, tourist associations, boards of trade, The Ministry of Transport, Alberta Aviation Council, flying clubs, commercial tour operators and flying enthusiasts. It was recommended from amongst the general public that the airfield should be removed or relocated in Canmore. Others suggested that it should be retained for emergency purposes only and maintained as a minimal facility.

As indicated by the Honourable Tom McMillan, Minister of the Environment, more study is needed to determine the future requirement for these facilities. The Banff and Jasper airstrips will be retained solely for landings for emergency purposes. It has been suggested that the need for these strips for emergency purposes should be monitored over the next three years by Parks officials or jointly with Ministry of Transport Officials, if they desire, and a final decision on whether to retain the facilities for emergencies should be made at the end of the test period.

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

Jasper National Park Core Concept

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Parks received 275 response forms on the Core Concepts prepared for Jasper National Park. Although most topics were discussed, public input was heaviest on the topics of horse use on the Skyline trail, use of electric motors on Park lakes, commercial jet boating on Park waterways and a proposal by residents in Jasper for a public golf course.

Most respondents supported the emphasis given to preservation and conservation in the Core Concepts. There were numerous reminders in the response forms that the planning and management of the park resources must include plans to improve the opportunities for visitor experiences. In line with this came recommendations for better and expanded information and interpretive services.

PARK CONCEPT

Public support was expressed regarding the overall Park Concept. There were comments supporting the need to develop co-operative strategies with regional and provincial agencies in order to meet the goals and objectives of the Park. It was recommended that development along park boundaries should be controlled because easy access to Zone I and Zone II areas could be detrimental to the Park.

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

The public responses gave a strong indication that protection of the natural environment was a high priority. It was recommended that if gravel extraction was allowed in the Park, it should be for the Park's use only. It was suggested that gravel pits outside the Park boundaries should be used whenever possible.

Respondents suggested that more emphasis must be given to the rehabilitation of disturbed sites and management practices in disturbed areas. In particular, the railway and pipeline were cited as prime candidates for impact assessment.

A fire management program which included prescribed burns, was seen as an acceptable method of managing Park forest resources. Some respondents however, questioned Parks' ability to guarantee control over planned ignition fires.

Support was expressed for the wildlife management concepts. Respondents mentioned that viewing wildlife was an important visitor activity. It was suggested that more backcountry tours would provide this viewing opportunity. The reduction of highway speed limits was suggested in order to help reduce wildlife mortality rates. In addition, it was suggested that the use of salt on the highways during the winter months should be eliminated so as not to attract wildlife to the area.

Sport fishing in Jasper National Park has a long history and is perceived by many as an acceptable park activity. Fish stocking in Park waters was advocated as a necessity for continuation of the sport. Those respondents objecting to fishing in the Park, suggested that only fish species native to the area should be used in fish stocking and that a "catch and release" policy for fishing should be initiated if the activity is to continue.

Public response to the question of air quality indicated that they saw a need for a policy and monitoring strategy to deal with air pollution. It was suggested that the high volume of bus traffic and the large number of wood burning fires were the main contributors to this problem.

VISITOR UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT

Backcountry Opportunities & Facilities

A number of respondents objected to the proposal to provide more roofed accommodation in the backcountry. These respondents contended that the backcountry should have no roofed accommodation and suggested the reduction or removal of lodges in the Tonquin Valley. It was felt that the fullest appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of a backcountry experience was lost with the presence of man-made roofed structures.

Those responding to the topic of long distance trails generally agreed that some trail linkage should be considered. In order to retain a more wilder experience, it was suggested by some that bridge construction was not needed on the longer trails.

Although backcountry camping was identified as an enjoyable activity for many respondents, it was suggested that random camping should not be permitted in the Park. These respondents prefered designated camping sites. A number of camping groups objected to the proposal to not allow backcountry group camping in the Park.

Day-Use Facilities & Services

A number of respondents have emphasized that day-use facilities contribute significantly to the visitor's enjoyment and appreciation of the Park. It was suggested that additional facilities are required for the elderly and disabled visitor. The need for more washroom facilities along major routes was one of the items stressed.

Recreation Activities

"Driving for pleasure" was recognised as a major recreational pursuit in national parks. It was suggested that to enhance the park experience, speed limits should be reduced and more roads should be opened to vehicular traffic.

The Core Concepts for cross-country skiing were generally supported by the public.

River jet-boating, although not considered appropriate in the Park, was identified as a popular recreational activity by a group of respondents. It was suggested that jet-boats could provide access to the backcountry, particularly for visitors (i.e. the elderly and handicapped) who have less opportunity to venture into this area.

The proposal to prohibit use of electric motors on Park lakes received considerable comment. Respondents to this issue recommended that electric motors should be allowed on boats used for fishing and sight-seeing because they cause no environmental impact.

Bicycling, particularly in the backcountry, has become a very popular form of recreation. Respondents to this topic felt that there was a strong potential for conflict with hikers and horse-users. It was recommended that trails should be designated for bicycle use and that these trails should not be located in backcountry areas because of possible environmental impacts.

A number of respondents felt that they could appreciate, understand and enjoy the national park resources better on horse back. With this in mind, these respondents opposed the elimination of horse use from trails such as the Skyline Trail. "Traditional use" of horses was cited as a cultural activity in the Park that it should be promoted and expanded. Those not in favour of horse use in the Park identified the impact of horses on the terrain, the need for trail maintenance and horse/hiker conflicts as valid reasons for not allowing the activity on Park trails. Hikers, who sharee trails with horse users, found horses objectionable and unnatural in the pristine environment. To help solve this conflict, it was recommended that separate trails, specially designed for horse use, should be developed.

Caving and scuba diving were recognized by some respondents as valid park activities, however it was recommended that both activities should be closely monitored.

Dog sledding was seen as being an inappropriate activity in a national park.

ACCOMMODATION

Most of the public input on accommodation dealt with Outlying Commercial Accommodations (OCAs), campgrounds and hostels.

Public comments indicated that the existing size of OCAs was satisfactory and respondents did not support the expansion proposals. It was suggested that OCA expansion should not be allowed inside the national parks. Objections to an unlimited expansion of Jasper Park Lodge were expressed.

Since hostels provide an inexpensive accommodation option in the area, it was suggested that they should be considered a priority. In view of this, respondents questioned the proposed removal of a number of existing hostels (for example, the hostels at Whistlers and Maligne Canyon).

There was support for the Core Concepts which addressed campgrounds, and a number of suggestions to improve camping services. Among these were suggestions for a longer camping season, longer hours of operation, ample firewood supplies, and for better control and management of campgrounds.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

There were suggestions that improvements to transportation corridors throughout the Park were needed. Access to Jasper Townsite from the Yellowhead Highway was of particular concern. Better roadside signage and reduced speed limits were recommended as possible solutions to a number of highway problems.

Winter road conditions in the Park were felt to be poor and it was suggested that road maintenance needed improvement. The Maligne road in particular was identified as a problem area.

A recommendation was made for more public transportation to reduce the number of private vehicles clogging the transportation routes and to reduce pollution of the environment.

JASPER COMMUNITY CONCEPT

The proposals to limit and monitor townsite expansion were supported by those responding to the topic. Strict controls on townsite expansion were cited as necessary, in order to control potential environmental impacts on the area and to protect wildlife migration routes. Residents of the community requested that Parks ensure that the community is kept informed of and involved in local townsite matters.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

The need to improve communication and interpretation services was mentioned by a number of respondents. They suggested that making visitors knowledgeable about the Park should be a priority. Respondents felt that knowing what to expect and what not to expect was important in order to plan a visit. Recommendations cited by the public included improving information outlets at both the east and west gates, and making information available through commercial outlets and travel bureaus. Some concern was expressed that promotional material should not portray the Park as a tourist resort centre complete with urban amenities. It was suggested that the Park's natural aspects should be emphasized.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

In Jasper, a number of people felt that a public golf course and swimming pool were required for the use of both visitors and residents. The Palisade site and its immediate area was identified as the logical location to accommodate the golf course.

Some Jasper residents and local organizations, felt that the swimming pool should be operated or subsidized by the National Park.

There were also suggestions that a second ski hill should be considered for Jasper National Park.

AIR STRIP REMOVAL - UPDATE

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Support for retaining the present airfield has come from chambers of commerce, tourist associations, boards of trade, The Ministry of Transport, Alberta Aviation Council, flying clubs, commercial tour operators and flying enthusiasts. It was recommended from amongst the general public that the airfield should be removed. Others suggested that it should be retained for emergency purposes only and maintained as a minimal facility.

As indicated by the Honourable Tom McMillan, Minister of the Environment, more study is needed to determine the future requirement for these facilities. The Banff and Jasper airstrips will be retained solely for landings for emergency purposes. It has been suggested that the need for these strips for emergency purposes should be monitored over the next three years by Parks officials or jointly with Ministry of Transport Officials, if they desire, and a final decision on whether to retain the facilities for emergencies should be made at the end of the test period.

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

Kootenay National Park
Core Concept

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Parks received 93 response forms addressing the Core Concepts for Kootenay National Park. Many respondents stressed the need for preservation and conservation of the park resources. In addition, the need to minimize urban-like development was a constant and recurring concern.

Respondents felt that the increasing demand for park information must be met to ensure proper and appropriate visitor use, and to enhance visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the park resources.

The Core Concept dealing with commercial truck traffic on the Kootenay Parkway became the most contentious issue.

PARK CONCEPT

Among the recommendations received regarding the Park Concept were suggestions to:

- not expand facilities in the Sinclair Canyon;
- renovate but do not expand the Aquacourt; and
- implement improvements to solve traffic congestion, parking and safety problems in the vicinity of the Aquacourt.

Respondents stressed that there should be no new or expanded facilities in the Park and no encouragement of private sector development. It was noted that more overnight accommodation was required and that it should be developed in areas outside the Park. Respondents concurred with the regional integration concept. They supported the concept that Parks more actively co-operate with local communities and with neighbouring jurisdictions responsible for natural resource management.

The land use zoning concepts were suppoerted with only a few suggestions for change. It was recommended that Zone III, Natural Environment, should be expanded to serve as a buffer between the Wilderness Zone II and the Outdoor Recreation Zone IV. Some respondents indicated that Zone I, Special Preservation, should be extended; others expressed concern that visitor use of Zone I areas should not be strictly prohibited but rather they should be made more accessible through the provision of a guide service or interpretive program. Wilderness areas (Zone II), it was suggested, should be more "wild". This included the removal of any huts or shelters or at least a reduction in their capacity to less than 30 individuals.

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Respondents were strongly in favour of the priority being placed on the protection of Park resources. The concepts were well supported and several recommendations were made. A reduction of highway speed limits was cited as a means of protecting wildlife. Tied in with this was the call for more visitor education regarding wildlife protection measures. Some respondents were opposed to fishing in the park while others suggested that popular fishing locations should be stocked. In response to the fire management concept, there was some concern expressed over the agency's ability to contain "planned burns".

VISITOR UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT

The Core Concepts dealing with this topic were generally supported by the respondents. Among the suggestions made however, were that more hiking trails should be developed, more area should be designated as highly protected wildland, and the size of group camps should be reduced.

There was some opposition to changing the status quo. Comments made by respondents suggested that there was no need to expand picnic sites, viewpoints or day-use trails, however, the picnic site in Marble Canyon should be retained. Some respondents opposed the removal of Fay Hut with suggestions that its use should be limited or that another agency should be allowed to maintain it. Respondents also opposed the closing of

the cool pool at the Radium Hot Springs Aquacourt. Renovations to the pool were supported as long as the present "institutional design" was avoided. Comments citing a slumping economy, poor advertising and inflated prices, were given as reasons for the declining attendance at the Aquacourt.

RECREATION

Public response to the Core Concepts on recreational activities was supportive. Four topics -- driving for pleasure, cross-country skiing, bicycling, and horse use -- were focal areas for comment.

Under "driving for pleasure", there were frequent suggestions to reduce the speed limit along the Parkway.

Support for improving cross-country ski trails was received and recommendations were made to improve the marking of trails. There was some opposition to off-pavement and backcountry bicycling. Suggestions were made for separate paved bicycle trails or paved shoulders along the Parkway. "Horse use" received the widest range of comment. Although opposition to horse use, both commercial and private, was expressed, there were also suggestions to expand the amount of horse use allowed in the Park.

ACCOMMODATION

The frontcountry accommodation concepts were generally supported; however, opposition to any expansion of campgrounds and particularly outlying commercial accommodation, was expressed. Hostel development was viewed as an acceptable form of accommodation that should be considered in Kootenay National Park.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

The topic of commercial truck traffic on the Kootenay Parkway brought out a response both pro and con and engendered a number of letters and briefs. In the Core Concepts for Kootenay, options were presented to address this issue. In general, there was support for

the management and restriction of commercial truck traffic at designated times. Option #1, to re-route truck traffic to an alternate route, received some support but was also strongly opposed by commercial operators, boards of trade, local municipal authorities and provincial government transportation agencies. It was suggested that more study and discussion was needed before any decisions were made.

COMMUNICATIONS

Respondents supported the concepts of regional involvement and co-operation between other agencies and Parks in order to provide more information to visitors. Support was expressed for improving all forms of public information and interpretation, particularly in the area of personalized services.

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

Yoho National Park
Core Concept

RESPONSE FORM SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Parks received 82 response forms which addressed the Core Concepts for Yoho National Park. The comments from the public generally expressed strong support for Parks' management strategy for conservation and preservation and the retention of a natural environment. This strategy, it was felt, could best be achieved by limiting development and expanding information and interpretive services.

THE PARK CONCEPT

Strong support was expressed by the respondents for the overall Park Concept. Special emphasis was placed on protecting the Burgess Shales and designating the Kicking Horse River as part of the Heritage River System. Many respondents expressed a desire to see park facilities upgraded, but did not want to see facilities expand or new facilities added. Strong support was received for the land use zoning concepts. A few respondents suggested tighter controls and more restrictions on the activities and facilities allowed in Zone I and Zone II areas.

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Protection of the Park's resources was considered a high priority by the respondents. The importance of the Burgess Shales was again mentioned. Comments on this topic included suggestions that supervised access should be allowed and visitor education should be used to deter the removal of fossils. The need to carefully monitor water quality at Emerald Lake and Wapta Falls was also suggested under this topic.

Although the respondents generally supported controlled burns, it was suggested that thorough inventories of resources should be carried out before burns are allowed or prescribed. The proposals to extract gravel from outside the Park and to rehabilitate disturbed Park sites was supported by the respondents.

It was felt that co-operation between agencies and regional authorities was needed to protect wildlife populations in the Park. As a possible solution, a "no hunting" buffer zone on land surrounding the Park was recommended. It was also suggested that B.C. Forestry roads which lead to Park boundaries should be closed and that higher penalties should be imposed for poaching.

To protect the fish populations, it was recommended that only native fish species be used in fish stocking programs. In addition, the introduction of a catch and release program was suggested.

VISITOR UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT

Backcountry Opportunities and Facilities

The Core Concepts concerning backcountry opportunities and facilities were generally supported. Respondents expressing opposition wanted less development as well as the removal of those facilities that presently exist in semi-primitive areas. The majority of respondents on this topic favoured maintaining the Lake O'Hara visitor use quotas. Some felt that the bus was necessary to provide access for seniors to the area. A number of respondents disagreed with the concepts for increasing the size of existing backcountry lodges and with building new huts and shelters. Support was received for the backcountry camping concepts except for some opposition to the proposal for an additional campground for horse parties near the Ottertail trailhead. Some respondents did not favour the enlargement of campsites at Lake O'Hara.

Day-Use Facilities & Services

The Core Concepts concerning day-use facilities and services received support from those responding to the topic. Having more roadside facilities along major routes was suggested as a good way to introduce highway travellers to the special resources of the

Park. Some respondents, however, felt that existing day-use facilities, although in need of upgrading, were adequate. Opposition to proposals for additional facilities along the Takakkaw Falls and Emerald Lake roads was expressed.

A number of respondents, concerned about the urban-like character of trails and boardwalks in the Emerald Lake and Lake O'Hara areas, suggested that day-use trails should be constructed so that they were in harmony with their surroundings. Suggestions were also made however, for paved trails at Emerald Lake to provide easier access for senior citizens and the disabled and for the development of more loop trails.

Trail signage it was felt should include information on distances and approximate travel time as an aid to hikers. The Deer Lodge (Beaver Dam) Trail located near Hoodoo Creek campground was singled out as being in need of upgrading.

RECREATION

There were a number of comments concerning the conflicts between horse users, bicyclists and hikers on Park trails.

Opposition to horse use in the Park was expressed. There were a number of respondents who recommended a total ban on horse use. It was felt that the maintenance costs to keep the trails within environmentally acceptable standards was too high. It was suggested that if horse use was allowed in the Park, then the maintenance of trails should become the responsibility of the outfitters and other horse users. It was also suggested that horse use trails should be kept separate from hiking trails. Some respondents suggested that horse use be restricted to warden patrols and for stocking backcountry lodges. A few respondents supported horse use as a traditional activity in the Park.

Some respondents expressed opposition to bicycle use on Park trails, particularly in the Little Yoho, Kiwetinok Pass and the Ice River areas. These respondents felt that mechanized travel into backcountry areas was inappropriate, and that conflicts would occur between bicyclists and hikers. Those in favour of bicycle use suggested that a system of designated trails could provide a solution or that bicycling could be restricted to backcountry roads and the highway.

Canoeing, kayaking and rafting were viewed as being activities that were appropriate and should be allowed in national parks. There was some concern expressed about allowing boating of any kind on any Park lake.

Those respondents who commented on the topic of dog sledding were generally in favour of the activity. There were suggestions however, that dog sledding should be permitted only on designated trails and should not be allowed on hiking and cross-country ski trails.

"Driving for pleasure" was seen as an appropriate park activity. It was felt that the proposal to use the 1A Highway as a slower route for sight-seers was sound.

ACCOMMODATION

It was suggested that the existing level of accommodation was adequate and that no additional accommodation should be permitted inside the Park. It was further suggested that co-operation was needed with regional authorities to encourage the development of accommodation facilities outside the Park boundaries.

The proposal to improve and relocate the Whiskey Jack Hostel at Takakkaw Falls received favourable comments. It was suggested that the hostel could then be opened in the winter for use by cross-country skiers. There was also interest in having a hostel developed in or near the community of Field.

Enlargement of the campsites at Lake O'Hara was not recommended by those responding. As well, there was little support for a horse party campground along the Ottertail. Of the two campground options presented, there was a preference for upgrading the Hoodoo Creek and Chancellor Peak campgrounds. Respondents were not in favour of push carts or road access to the Takakkaw Falls campground. The concept of random camping in the Amiskwi and Ice River areas was supported because of the remoteness of the backcountry and the distances required to access it. Another recommendation made by respondents was to allow group camping in the western portion of the park.

In regard to the options for new trail shelters, respondents favoured the option for no new trail shelter development.

ACCESS

The Core Concepts on access were supported by those responding to the topic. It was felt that more emphasis needed to be placed on providing public transit, particularly from Field to the trailheads and other visitor destinations. Some concern was expressed that the upgrading of the 1A Highway would destroy its historic integrity.

COMMUNITY CONCEPT

The Field Community Concept, which proposed to maintain Field as a small service centre for the Park, received a favourable response.

COMMUNICATIONS

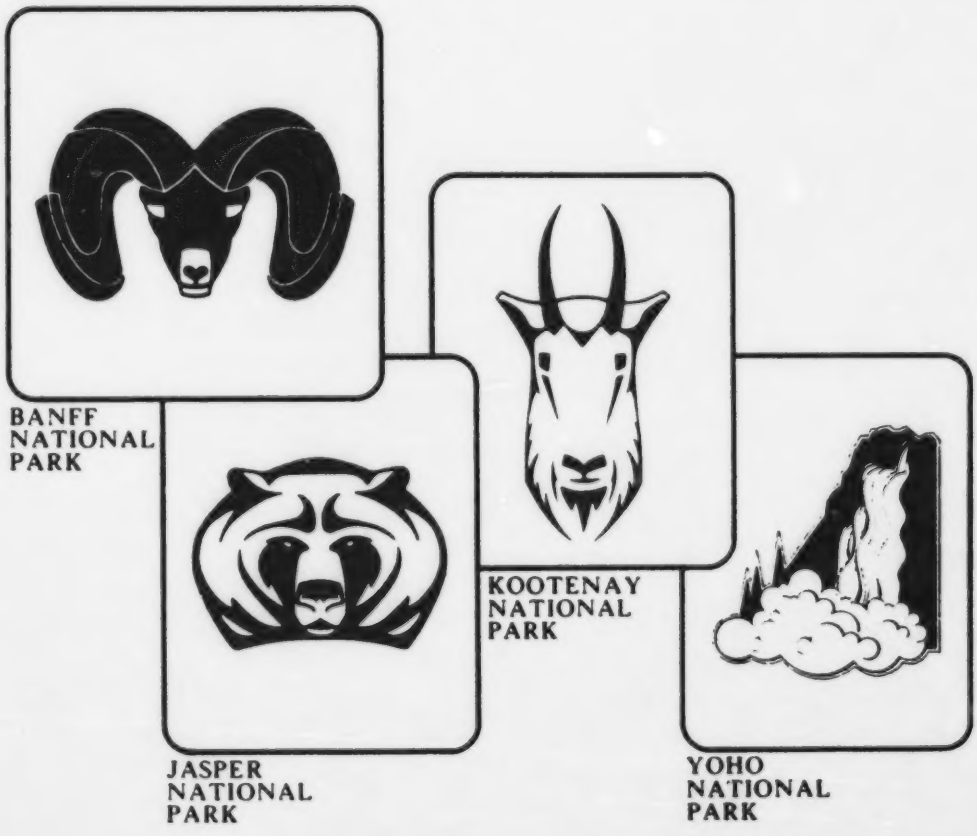
The concepts for communication services received support from those respondents who commented on the subject. Most of these respondents stated that there was a need to expand and increase the level of information and interpretation services. Support was expressed for the proposals to co-ordinate the information available among the Four Parks and to co-operate more with Travel Alberta and B.C. Tourism to ensure that consistent and correct information is provided to visitors. It was suggested that self guiding tapes for visitor use (either through sales or rental) would provide a means of improving visitor information, awareness and appreciation of Park resources. Recommendations were also made to develop a museum or interpretive centre in Field.

The proposal to replace the West Gate information facility with an exhibit was not widely supported by those responding. Many respondents felt that exhibits were too impersonal and that Field was too far to travel for more detailed information.

4 MOUNTAIN PARKS

section 2

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY



The following section contains a compilation of the comments and suggestions made by participants at each of the public meetings held during this stage of the program. The comments, observations and recommendations have been listed in point form and categorized into topics. Notes from each meeting have been presented separately.

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Public Meeting

INVERMERE - February 23, 1987

The main issues at the Invermere meeting were Parks' proposals regarding commercial trucking on Highway 93 and redevelopment of the Radium Aquacourt.

Access

- There is a need to address more fully the needs of the elderly and disabled. Concern was expressed because the construction of ramps at the Aquacourt is being deferred another year.

- Improve the Dolly Varden and Olive Lake sites for the elderly and disabled users.

Trucking - Highway 93

- Let commercial trucking on the highway continue as it is. Parks should provide a 4 lane highway or fences to keep wildlife off the road.

- Although commercial traffic makes up only 5% of the total traffic volume, without this commercial traffic, the road would be closed during the winter months.

- Many in the trucking business feel that the number of animal kills on the highway is not as serious as it is made out to be.

- The alternate routes suggested in the report, that would bring goods to Radium economically, do not exist.

- If wildlife mortality rates increase with the use of salt on the roads, a solution would be to eliminate the salt applications on the highway. Another solution could be to establish salt licks away from the highways in order to encourage elk to stay away from the traffic.

- The signage designed to warn travellers of wildlife in the area, particularly in regard to goats, is not adequate.

- When roads are in bad condition, most of the traffic problems are related to tourists who are unprepared and ill-equipped for winter driving.

- Rather than restricting traffic as a means to protect the elk, could not Parks replace the losses in the Park's elk population with commercially bred elk?

- Traffic speed limits should be enforced throughout the week, not only on Fridays and Saturdays.

- The proposal to change the name of the Banff-Windermere Highway to the "Kootenay Parkway" was not appropriate.

Economics

- The economic implications of the alternatives and existing truck routes were not thoroughly discussed in the background report that was presented.

- Improved facilities and services should be available now at the Aquacourt. These improvements are being shelved because of the current economic conditions.

- Money collected by the province through the fuel tax should be used for highway improvements on federal lands.

- Where will the money come from to pay for the facilities proposed in the plan? This information is needed by the public in order to make valid comments on the proposals.

Horse Use

- How were the decisions made to not allow horse use on six of the trails?

- "Traditional use" is a poor reason to continue horse use in the Park.

Bicycling

- Only two trails (Dolly Varden and Simpson River) are available for bicycling. How was the decision made to make only these two trails available to bicyclists?

- Bicycling is less damaging to the trails than hiking or horse use. It is also a much cheaper activity than horse use.

Aquacourt

- The Aquacourt is in need of upgrading, particularly for use by the handicapped and elderly. Wheelchair ramps, textured hand rails, telephones for the hearing impaired, washrooms designed for the handicapped and the removal of some barriers are some of the suggested improvements.

- Although the area has been well kept, the facilities have not improved over time. The facility should be restored to its original grandeur.

- The Aquacourt has the potential to become like a European Spa. We need this kind of facility here for our visitors.

- People will go to the places where they can participate in group activities. Undertake the improvements to the Aquacourt facilities, then promoted the facility for group activities.

Entrance Gate

- In order to reduce traffic lineups, the entrance gate should be moved to a new location east of the hot springs.

- Parks should stop charging people for using the Lodge facilities. You now have to pay the Park entrance fees if you have to pick up someone at the Lodge.

General Discussion

- Are the public comments taken seriously?

- There is a concern that Kootenay does not get its fair share of Parks' money. How much does Parks spend on advertising for Banff and Jasper compared to the amount spent on Kootenay and Yoho?

- The reports are full of statements such as "assessments will be made", "guidelines need study", etc. This lack of information results in very vague guidelines and scepticism on how the plans will be implemented.

- What can we expect to happen over the next 15 years, with regard to our discussions on the Aquacourt, the highways, the gate location, the fee structures, etc.?

Public Meeting

FIELD - February 24, 1987

The main issues identified at the public meeting in Field were horse use and access into the backcountry. Both of these topics were tied in with the Park trail system.

Wildlife

- This is the last home of most of the wildlife in the area. The Core Concepts speak of wildlife that in some cases is no longer here.

- Wildlife habitat in Yoho Park that is not represented elsewhere in the Park system, should be noted and protected.

- Dog sledding could cause serious conflicts with moose and should be banned from the park.

Horse Use

- This is the park where the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies first held their rides. Horse use in Yoho National Park is a traditional activity and is part of the Park's history.

- Problems associated with horse use include trail maintenance, conflict with other users and trail upgrading.

- If horse users are expected to assist in trail maintenance then hikers should also assist in trail maintenance.

- Horse use is considered a traditional activity and visitors expect to be able to ride in Western Canadian Parks.

- A maintenance budget for horse use trails needs to be developed by Parks to ensure proper maintenance of these trails.

- Trail braiding is not a problem caused by horse use, it is caused by hiker activity.

- Dual trail systems work and they should be implemented here.

- Horse trails should be confined to the lower valley.

Access

- Bicycle trails from Field along the Amiskwi Valley to the commercially operated hut outside the park should be developed. There seems to be no consistency in the activities allowed in the Amiskwi Pass.

- New trails that would intrude into grizzly habitat should not be allowed.

- Do we really need the Kiwetinok Pass trail?

- There is a lot of impact in the Amiskwi area. Bicycles are now penetrating deep into this area and this is a concern.

- A bridge in the Ottertail area is a great idea.

- Allow the Amiskwi area to be used as a primitive through-park access route.

- There is no justification for development in the Ottertail area.

- The requirement for hikers to double back on the trail when hiking in the Amiskwi area causes over use of the trail. Development of loop trails would reduce this impact.

- Developing a primitive corridor from the Goodsirs to Amiskwi Pass would allow access through Howse Pass to Saskatchewan Crossing.

Conservation/Preservation

- If a unique sub-species of Sculpin exists in the park, action to protect it should occur quickly.

- Wildlands are becoming more important for the protection of our natural resources. The Ottertail area should be designated a primitive area and should never be allowed to develop.

Fishing

- Is the stocking of fish in the Parks going to cease completely?

- If cars are allowed access to fishing sites, this will create problems.

- If the no fish stocking policy is implemented, the price of licences should be reduced since there will be less chance of making a catch.

- Has the no fish stocking policy been established, or is the issue still open for research and a change in policy?

Campgrounds

- There is mention in the Core Concepts of moving the Whale-back campground. This would be desirable because of the human waste problem that exists there.

Trails

- Trails in the Amiskwi area should not lead into grizzly bear country.

- Bicycle trails are being established on fire roads and forestry roads in the Amiskwi area. This is causing serious impact in this area.

- Consideration must be given to extending day hiking trails inside the Park.

- Upgrading trails does not necessarily mean increasing their capacity to handle more hikers, but rather it means getting the best use of the trails and making the hiking experience more aesthetic.

- Dog sledding trails provide greater travel potential into the Park and should be controlled.

General Discussion and Comments

- There seems to be no consistency in the region for the decisions that are made, for example there are restrictions on visitor use in Amiskwi Pass yet there is heavy use allowed in Howse Pass.

- How do you justify development and use in one area and not in another?

- Parks continues to upgrade facilities on one hand and then restricts use and applies use quotas on the other. This poses a conflict in policy.

- Parks planning seems to allow the greatest number of people to use an area while providing the lowest quality experience.

Public Meeting

BANFF - February 25, 1987

The major concerns at the Banff meeting were Johnson Lake, the Banff airstrip and townsite development issues.

Johnson Lake

In contrast to the comments submitted through the response forms, a 2,200 signature petition in support of restoring Johnson Lake, had been forwarded to the Minister of the Environment. Although there were differences in opinion expressed by those attending the Banff meeting, the point was made that Johnson Lake is the "only feature in the area worth saving".

- The reduction in the lake level means that swimmers would have to travel all the way to Invermere to participate in this activity.

- The area in its present state is a "mess". Restoration to its former state would cost "millions of dollars".

Tourism

- Banff and Jasper are the two major tourist areas in Alberta. For this reason and because of the inherent economic advantages, tourism should be actively promoted by Parks.

- The interpretive programs run by Parks are not conducive to the growth of the tourist industry. They should be adjusted to be more compatible.

Icefields Parkway

- Parks needs to upgraded services along the Icefields Parkway in order to promote year round use and to encourage businesses to remain open.

- If Parks wants tourists on the Parkway year round, let's cater to their needs.

Transportation/Access

- Fences similar to the fences along the T.C.H. should be installed along the Parkway, in order to avoid the animal/automobile conflicts and reduce animal kills.

- The reduction of planned pull-offs along the T.C.H. will encourage travellers to pull off the highway at random locations. This will create new problems and should be reconsidered in the final recommendations of the plan.

- The location of the entry point for bicyclists and hikers, accessing the Bow Valley Parkway from the Vermilion Lakes Drive should be moved. The present location is very dangerous and a safer entry is required.

Hiker/Horse Use

- The conflict between horse use and hiker use remains. More information on this conflict is needed.

- Are there priorities established by Parks regarding trail use? It is disappointing to see the cut back in horse use.

Airfield

- The proposed closing of the Banff Airfield is strongly opposed.

- There appears to be no conflict between the elk who pasture in the area and the airfield, as is indicated by 50 years of aircraft operation with no incidents of collision.

- This is the only field in the area for small aircraft operating under Visual Flight Rules on this mountain route.

- If the field was closed, it would deteriorate to the point where it would be of no use to elk or aircraft.

- After 50 years of use, the airfield should be rehabilitated rather than abandoned.

- The airfield should be retained because it generates revenue for the community.

Townsite Development

- Parks has not made any provisions for individual home ownership or for the development of staff accommodation. There are however, many violations and inconsistencies occurring in the housing regulations.

- When will there be enough information available to address the water and sewage problems. A slow down in development should occur until the solution to these problems is evident.

- The Core Plan does not address the social and cultural problems in the overall planning for the park.

- The boundaries should not be established now, and should allow for the right of expansion in the future.

- The government approach seems to presuppose that the residents of Banff Townsite want self government. This is a questionable supposition that should be considered seriously.

Huts

- The removal of the Freshfield hut on the basis of low use levels, is correct, although the reasons for the low use level lies in difficulty of access to the site.

- The establishment of the Freshfield hut was a mistake. No more hut development should be allowed in this area.

General Discussion

- The Core Concepts appear to be well thought out.

- Due to the lack of adequate funding, good environmental protection measures are often not implemented.

- Land use management is resource based, however, the core concepts, as presented, are not given enough resource base emphasis.

Public Meeting

CALGARY - February 27, 1987

Commercial trucking on Highway 93, snowmobiling, the airfield and townsite development were the topics most often mentioned in the Calgary meeting.

General Comments - The Plan

- There is a need to be more specific and precise when describing issues.

- The plan, if approved, is going to cost a lot of money to implement. These costs should become part of the planning process and should be included as part of the plan.

Townsite

- The townsite boundaries should not be expanded. Particular concern was expressed with regard to expansion into the elk calving area.

- More information is needed on the new bridge issue.

Boating

- Will electric motors be allowed on boats in Banff as they are in Jasper? Little direction has been provided in the documents. Will this concern be clearly addressed in the final plan?

Airfield (Banff)

- The airfield should be kept open. Unless it is maintained it would be useless as an emergency strip.

- Any attempt to close the airfield should only occur after an alternate facility is provided.

- Parks talk about returning the field to its natural state. In order to do this, they would have to remove both aircraft and elk, since neither are indigenous to the area.

Spray River Hostel

- The Spray River hostel should not be closed, particularly during the winter when access to it could be accomplished by snowmobile. A service road should be maintained to the facility for summer use.

Vermilion Lakes Drive

- The Vermilion Lakes Drive should be available to bicyclists and hikers only. All automobile traffic should be banned from it.

- The Vermilion Lakes Drive should be made part of a bicycling trail from Banff to Jasper. It could be built by students and volunteers.

Interpretive Services

- There is some concern with regard to the interpretive programs. Most interpreters are now only showing films rather than providing guided interpretive tours on the trails.

- The interpretive service should be expanded by using park staff and trained people rather than concessionaires.

Snowmobiling

- Snowmobile enthusiasts are concerned that the opportunity to enjoy the backcountry via snowmobile access is being further reduced. This is also the situation with regard to provincial lands. A recommendation is made that a corridor be established in the Park for snowmobile users and that heavy fines be applied for anyone outside this corridor. Rather than eliminate the sport - control the activity.

- Snowmobiles should not be allowed in the parks because of the noise and because they are not permitted in national park systems elsewhere in the world.

Transportation/Access

- Highway 93 should continue to be used for commercial truck traffic because the proposed alternate routes are too expensive. The extra cost of transportation would have to be absorbed by the consumer.

- Regulations for truckers are more stringently enforced by the companies than by the Provinces. Truckers on the highway are very cognizant of wildlife resources and make every effort to protect this resource. Drivers often report suspicious activities such as poaching.

Outlying Commercial Accommodations

- Why was the Rocky Mountain Resort allowed to double its capacity? Allowing this development clearly indicates that Parks are not really encouraging development outside the Park boundaries.

Cross-country Skiing

- Cross-country skiing is an acceptable activity in the Park that should be promoted through the expansion and addition of more trails.

Hot Springs

- The Hot Springs should serve as a community facility.

- The Hot Springs are a national resource and should be treated accordingly.

- Is the research on this topic focusing on the Hot Springs as a national resource or is the research concerned with the business of access, parking and management of visitors to the resource?

Public Meeting

EDMONTON - March 2, 1987

Participants at the Edmonton meetings generally focused on the national parks mandate. Comments were for the most part either for more, or less facility development.

Tourism

- The establishment and maintenance of a Parks managed swimming facility in the townsite is not recommended. Parks can not be everything to everybody. Urbanization of national parks is not a Parks objective. Swimming pools and golf courses are facilities that should be located in urban centres outside the parks.

- Parks primary objectives are not to balance budgets through tourist promotion schemes but to manage a national park system through heritage conservation and preservation of our natural resources.

- The Provinces run tourism on the backs of lands saved by the Federal Government.

- The Edmonton City Council in concert with the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce indicated that:
    - a tourist-oriented approach for managing Jasper would provide significant economic and social benefits to the Province of Alberta;
    - priority they stated, should be given to private development and job creation opportunities;
    - the Jasper airstrip should be retained;
    - the development of another ski hill and public golf course were proposed as sound tourist generators.
    - hospitality training for staff is needed.

Access

- Promote more visitor use but do not build more roads.

- Close the airfield to commercial travel. Do not allow aircraft such as the Dash 8.

- Access to facilities and services for the handicapped and elderly needs more planning.

- Licensed concessionaires should be permitted to provide access to areas such as Mt. Edith Cavell by snowmobile in the winter months.

- Allow access to the backcountry by river boat.

- Allow the province to develop a transportation corridor through the park in exchange for new park land north of the park.

- If you allow increased access to the backcountry, you just transform it into a new frontcountry area.

Recreation

- A covered swimming pool under Parks' sponsorship should be operated for the visitor(s) seeking this activity in the park.

- A second golf course should be developed in the Palisades area. The existing course is available primarily to guests of Jasper Park Lodge.

- What is Parks' policy on developing more golf courses. Is this a decision that can be made by the regional office?

Backcountry

- What is a "designated wilderness" area?

- National parks provide unique wilderness landscape.

- Better access to the backcountry is needed, particularly for the handicapped and aged.

- The bears must be removed if people are allowed into bear country.

- Frontcountry development results in pressure on the backcountry that is more than the backcountry can tolerate.

- If the backcountry is opened to commercial development, it becomes a frontcountry area. We should never attempt to get everyone into the backcountry.

Frontcountry

- The amount of frontcountry development exceeds the ability of the backcountry to accommodate users.

- Too many frontcountry facilities such as the Y.M.C.A. hostels and campgrounds are being closed.

- Businessmen must do a better job with frontcountry accommodation and services.

- It is a dangerous philosophy to exchange frontcountry areas for backcountry areas.

- The frontcountry must give you a feeling for the park atmosphere. We must protect the access corridor from over-development, this is the only area some visitors see.

- No more development should be allowed in the Icefields area - it is too sensitive.

- There should be an option for reducing the size of the townsite.

Wildlife

- Preserve the parks for wildlife - over use will destroy the parks.

- Support the Parks' mandate for wildlife preservation.

- What is being done to promote wildlife values?

- Will wildlife preservation be jeopardised in favour of developing the transportation corridors?

Power Boating

- The 1976 Park regulations allowed the use of electric motors on Park lakes. There is no reason to exclude electric motors for fishing - there is no environmental impact - no user conflicts.

- Electric power boating is needed by senior citizens and the handicapped. This activity should be allowed where roads to the waterfronts are available.

General Comments

- National park land must be preserved. Recreation land can be created on cut-lines and mined areas outside the Park.

- Park lands are the only ones suitable for some activities. These activities should be allowed to develop.

- Parks should permit activities that allow more people to see the parks.

- Allow Jasper Townsite 100 acres for development of recreation facilities. Private facilities are not now available to the townsite residents (i.e. swimming pool, golf).

- We have a limited supply of natural resources in Canada. Parks manages many resources that should be developed.

- The closure of Highway 93 (Banff - Windermere) will create an overload on the highway at Banff, Lake Louise and the Golden triangle.

- The road (Highway 93) is bad for trucking, but there are other viable choices.

- There should be more development allowed along the Yellowhead Corridor unless there are statistics on environmental impacts which show that it would not be a good idea.

Public Meeting

JASPER - March 4, 1987

The main issues at the Jasper meeting were horse use, fishing and the use of electric motors on boats, a new golf course and the development of more tourist services and facilities.

Motor Boating

- What specific objections are there to electric motor boating?

- Road access to lake fronts for motor boating is necessary. Will the road to Medicine Lake be improved?

Special Preservation Areas

- The Maligne Karst is too easily accessible. Adequate protection for this feature is a concern.

- In 1982 another Karst feature was discovered in the Snaring River area. This area should receive a Zone I designation.

Horse Use

- What other proposed changes to horse use are there other than the restrictions on the Skyline Trail?

- There is a lot of damage being done by horse use on Maligne Pass.

- The removal of horses from the Skyline Trail will have a significant effect on the opportunities for the elderly and handicapped to have access to this area.

- The reduction of trails designated for horse use affects the livelihood of horse outfitters at Curator.

- Separate trails should be designated for horse users and hikers. The Skyline trail would be ideal for horse users.

Fishing

- The price of fishing licences has gone up while fish stocking is being reduced.

- A lack of fishing opportunities will mean that fishermen will no longer come to Jasper. Is this what you want?

- Raising fishing licence fees will not raise more money, you'll simply sell fewer licences by not stocking the lakes.

- What will the policy recommendation be on fish stocking?

- Will existing fish populations be allowed to die out?

Camping and Campgrounds

- Is the "no camping" restriction in place along the western part of the park a change in policy?

- Camp kitchens should be installed every 10 miles along the north boundary for use by back-packers . Why is Parks removing camp kitchens previously provided?

Jasper Townsite

- The size and density of Jasper townsite must be controlled in order to maintain the park atmosphere.

- A lot of planning goes into the impact of the townsite on wildlife. Has there been any research on the impact of wildlife on residents? People seem to take second place in these studies.

- How will lots be allocated in the new area which extends toward the highway?

Economics

- Parks' operational costs are increasing. Will this lead to increases in the facility fee structures or will the taxpayer have to carry the entire load?

- The improvement of backcountry facilities is not economically appropriate. Parks are providing expensive facilities for a few people in the backcountry rather than catering to a majority of users in the frontcountry.

- Entrance gates are often not manned; Parks are losing an opportunity to collect fees.

- Financial planning must occur along with the resource and visitor use plans. Where will the required funds come from. Are townsite taxes to go up? Will gate fees be increased?

Tourism

- Parks are for everyone to use. Programs which encourage more people to visit the national parks, should be developed.

- Money is available from other federal departments and the Alberta Government for tourism development projects. Parks are not responding to the opportunities proposed by developers to increase tourism.

Caving

- Guidelines for caving are not mentioned in the Core Concepts as promised. This issue should be settled soon. The planners agree to one set of guidelines and the managers say something else.

Golf

- It is odd that provincial and federal representatives make donations for the development of ski hills and golf courses, yet Parks will not permit the development of these facilities. It is a pity for the people who come to golf but are not allowed to.

- The Palisades area would make a good golf course, yet it has not been considered. Towns people and visitors are not often allowed on the Jasper Park Lodge course.

- Why would Jasper Park Lodge be allowed to build a second golf course? Who would pay for its development?

- A second golf course is needed in this area even though some people believe that National Parks should not have golf courses.

Public Consultation

- Listening to individual concerns does not lead to a consensus on what should happen.

- The public is not fully aware of what is happening in the planning process. We must only accept what the planners wish to tell us.

- There should be more citizen involvement from the beginning. Planners, businessmen, environmental groups etc. should make some compromises around the table.

- To what degrec do these meetings change policy. It seems some of the things discussed here are never reported as discussed.

General Discussion

- How will the general plan affect what people can do in the parks? This consideration is not present in the plan. We need a compromise between preservation and use.

- Other parks give visitors something to do, what opportunities are we providing in Jasper?

- If we respond only to demands, the park will soon no longer exist, because there will be no demand except for ski hills and golf courses.

- Interpretive programs in Jasper do not meet the demand for these services.

- Ninety-five percent of the park is managed as backcountry, I would suggest that 95% of the visitors are not backcountry users.

- A lot of improvements are needed to accommodate and improve services for the majority of users.

- The people planning the parks have to consider all the environmental, social and economic concerns or the final plan will end up in a mess.

- By the time the plan is implemented, it will be time to develop a new plan.

Public Meeting

VANCOUVER - March 9, 1987

Participants at the Vancouver meeting generally focused on Parks' reasoning behind the Core Concepts. There were no concerns about specific proposal other than the proposal regarding commercial trucking on Highway 93.

Horse Use

- Private horse users appear to be dealt with differently from the commercial horse operations, particularly with regard to the Skyline Trail. Private horse users should be allowed to use outfitters' trails. Horse trails must be separated and clearly marked as such.

Accommodations

- Will more facilities be permitted along the Icefields Parkway under your terms for upgrading?

- Peak accommodation rates are being reached in Banff and Lake Louise. Once accommodation peaks are reached, a reservation system should be put into place.

- The proposal to reduce accommodation at Amethyst Lake should be changed to allow continued visitor use of this area.

- The bungalow at Moraine Lake should be allowed to continue to operate, particularly for older people.

Regional Development

- Is Parks having any success in negotiating and co-operating with regional agencies for development buffer zones outside the parks? The forestry industry in B.C. is encroaching on the boundaries of Yoho National Park. Roads are now developed up to the park boundaries.

- The B.C. Parks department is able to adjust provincial park boundaries for any number of reasons, is this boundary manipulation possible with regard to national parks?

Access - Transportation

- Are there plans to interconnect backcountry trails in order to facilitate hiking from one end of the park to another?

- Visitors operating self contained vehicles demand a lot of services. These demands are being catered to and it is resulting in over development of service facilities. This seems to be in conflict with Parks' objectives for limiting development.

- Do Parks have jurisdiction over the airspace above the park? If not, sight-seeing from aircraft could catch Parks off guard and interfere with park operations.

- More people can visit the park and yet place fewer demands on facilities by using a bus system than by travelling in self-contained units. A policy should be developed to exclude facilities for self contained units.

- In order to access certain areas of the park, you have to cross privately leased lands (i.e. Jasper Park Lodge). Is this considered trespassing and can one be prosecuted?

- Motorized access on the Athabasca Glacier creates a noise problem in this natural area and should be banned.

Airfields

- The airfields in Banff and Jasper are on the only V.F.R. routes through the mountains. These are needed by small aircraft for navigation and safety reasons.

Trucking on Highway 93

- Parks are not justified in banning commercial trucking through Kootenay.

- Are the three routes identified in the report the only alternatives that there are?

- More studies are needed. Commercial traffic on the highway does not create the wildlife impacts that are implied.

- Grassy areas along the right-of-way and salt on the highway attracts wildlife to the area. There must be a way to discourage elk from utilising the roadways.

Wilderness

- How will the Core Concept proposals made here be affected by the new wilderness legislation?

- Is there significant change in these proposals from what now exists?

- Will the new wilderness designation effect existing lodge locations?

Wildlife

- Have the new poaching laws and higher fines been implemented yet?

- The national parks are faced with the problem that once they meddle with wildlife, the problem gets worse.

World Heritage

- What restrictions are imposed on Parks now that these four parks have been designated as World Heritage sites?

- When these plan come up for review, what restrictions will be placed on the parks as a result of their being designated World Heritage Sites.

- Will it be a component of future public awareness programs to identify these parks as heritage sites?

- Do the Core Concepts provide for the protection of heritage resources and cultural items?

Backcountry

- What is Parks' policy on rescue in the mountains or backcountry? Parks should continue their rescue services, however, there should be some legal method of assigning responsibility to others.

- Is the policy of closing roads in order to encourage natural re-vegetation, going to interfere with fire management and rescue operations in the backcountry?

- Will Parks allow an increase in the number of people permitted access to the backcountry, or are there plans to reduce access?

Forestry

- Are there plans which deal with the problem of pine beetle infestation in the parks? Trees that are infested should be removed.

- These infestations are part of the pine beetles' natural cycle. Spraying for pine beetles in New Brunswick did not solve the problem.

Boating

- Improved information on river access and egress is required for novice users.

Communication/Interpretation

- Is there the same emphasis on interpreting the eco-systems in the frontcountry as there is with the backcountry? Will visitors looking for information about the frontcountry be catered to or will they be sent elsewhere?

- Install an information board at Takakkaw Falls, or provide some other method of providing interpretive information at this site.

Trails

- There should be guided interpretive walks on park trails.

- Hiking trails and bicycle trails should be separated.

- A system of interconnecting trails would allow hikers access to trails from one end of the park to another in the National Parks.

General Discussion

- What is the policy on hang gliding in national parks?

- What is the status of the proposal to privatize the Hot Springs in Banff. The operation of the facility should stay with Parks.

- Is Parks promoting tourism or are they attempting to control the number of visitors?

- Why does Parks allow the killing of fish and at the same time, ban hunting?

- At what stage are the plans which would extricate Banff and Jasper townsites from Parks' control? Would they then become autonomous?

- Wildlife in the parks is protected from dogs, but there are no provisions for human protection from dogs.

- Are there similar planning processes going on for Revelstoke, Glacier and Pacific Rim national parks?

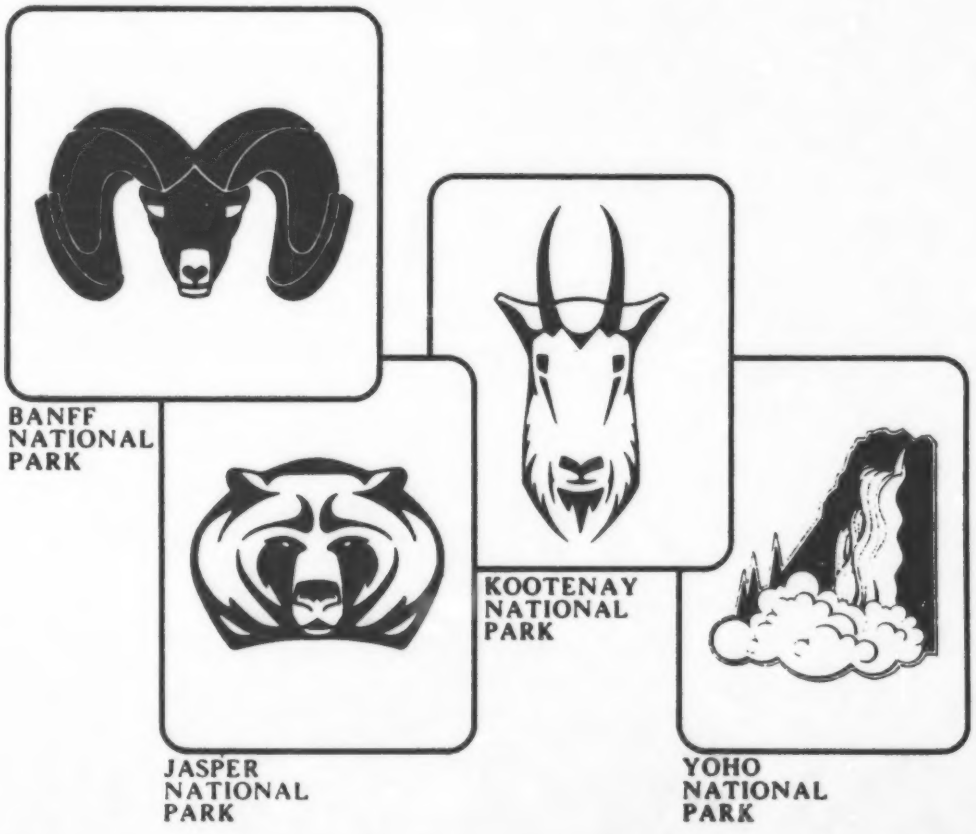
- What is Parks' policy regarding drive-through restaurants, such as MacDonalds?

- Will there be development guidelines and motifs established in the future and will these guidelines be enforced retroactively?

4 MOUNTAIN PARKS

section 3

LETTER & BRIEF SUMMARY



REPORT ON LETTERS AND BRIEFS

Environment Canada, Parks received over a hundred letters and briefs in response to the Four Mountain Parks Planning Program following the meetings in February and March, 1987. This public impact, which included submissions from Members of the Legislative Assembly, environmental groups, horse councils and outfitters, industry and manufacturing establishments, barristers and solicitors, flying clubs, ski hill operators, municipal councils, chambers of commerce, school boards, wildlife organizations, tourist associations and agencies, regional planning commissions, provincial museums, farming groups and many private citizens and park visitors reflects the wide range of public interest in the topic of national parks planning. Many of the comments and concerns found in these letters and briefs were included in the analysis of the response forms and will not be repeated here. This section contains a summary of some additional information not covered in the response format but which was none-the-less of interest to the planning teams and steering committee.

BANFF NATIONAL PARK

In contrast to the comments submitted through the response forms, a 2,200 signature petition in support of restoring Johnson Lake, had been forwarded to the Minister of the Environment.

The Core Concepts for Lake Louise Visitor Centre received a fair amount of comment. Two major issues were identified in the correspondence received.

First, concern was expressed about the removal of residential trailer homes. Many residents were having difficulty recovering their investment in their trailer home. This was being further complicated for those who had a "need to reside", and were forced to accept rental accommodation provided for them by employers.

The second issue was related to the proposal for a "small village concept". Respondents felt that the required minimum level of service for even a small village would not be met. They held the view that the community was unable to attract service oriented businesses and professionals to Lake Louise because of the policy of "no private home ownership". Statements that "the low growth option" prevents our community from becoming a "first class resort" were made. Recommendations were made that the Action Plan should be reviewed in the near future.

JASPER NATIONAL PARK

In response to the Jasper Core Concept, there were recommendations made by various interest groups that consideration be given to a number of facility proposals in the park. Among these were suggestions for the townsite swimming pool and a proposal for a public golf course. The Palisades was identified as the logical site for a golf course. The proposal was supported by a large local group who also provided a design for a golf course. Other alternatives suggested for using the Palisades facility included its use as a hospitality training centre, a school of fine arts, an environmental training centre and a convention/education centre.

It was suggested that the Miette Hot Springs should be kept open for longer periods during the year, for example, from Victoria Day to Thanksgiving with the possibility of year round operation in the future. The need for a "cool" pool was also suggested.

A number of briefs and letters relating to horse use in the national parks were received. They emphasized that horse use was considered a "traditional activity" of cultural value and, in addition, provided opportunities for the elderly and handicapped to safely experience the backcountry. These briefs indicated that park visitors expected horse use to be part of their visit and for many, the opportunity to ride was important. Concern was expressed regarding the conflict between hikers and horse riders and the perception that preferred treatment was being given to the hikers. In Jasper a number of horse owners and enthusiasts indicated a dire need for additional paddock space.

Some additional comments that were made on the Jasper Core Concepts are as follows:

1. Rather than proposing "more use" we should be aiming for "better use" of park resources.
2. Mountaineering should be clearly identified as a legitimate form of park use.
3. Regulations that cover similar activities in all four parks should be identified.
4. Ambulance Services in the townsites of Banff and Jasper should be subsidised by parks.
5. Snowmobiling should be allowed to continue in Jasper Park but it should be strictly controlled and restricted to designated areas.
6. Howse Pass should be developed as an alternative transportation route since it provides the shortest route through national park lands, reduces the pressures on the Trans-Canada and the Yellowhead highways, and provides a convenient route for central Albertans and British Columbians.
7. The old Pocohontas townsite and coal mine should be restored and developed.
8. Parks must consider four-lane through access in Jasper National Park to compliment major upgrading of the Yellowhead route leading into the Park from the east.
9. The Snaring karst formation requires consideration as a very special area and needs increased protection.
10. There is a need for an interpretive centre with guided tours at the Devona Cave and at other archaeological sites.
11. The lodge in the Tonquin area should not be eliminated.

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK

The major issue in the Kootenay Park concepts that generated additional comment was the proposal for restricting commercial truck traffic on Highway 93. This option was criticized in a number of letters and recommendations were made for further study of the situation.

GENERAL

Parks received letters and briefs of a general nature which expressed very strong views about developments which have occurred or have been proposed during the course of the planning program. The concern was that these major development proposals, which were initially omitted or not considered in the planning program, have now resulted in major changes to the park plans. Cited as examples were:

- the expansion at Chateau Lake Louise,
- expansion proposals for the Rimrock Hotel,
- Sulphur Mountain Gondola,
- Banff Springs Golf Course expansion,
- Banff Townsite land use planning,
- redevelopment of Jasper Park Lodge,
- the Banff and Jasper airstrips, and
- Sunshine Village Ski Area proposals.

Additionally, it was stated that excessive emphasis had been given to the management and mitigation of impacts. It was suggested that if proper environmental planning occurred, there would be no need for mitigation measures. Respondents recommended that zoning be designed to best protect resources rather than be designed as a response to park users.

Concern was expressed that expansion and development continues to occur in the national parks in spite of statements that National Park Policy would curtail these activities. It was implied that Parks is reluctant to make what might be in some cases an unpopular decision and therefore are stalling the passing of Bill C-30.